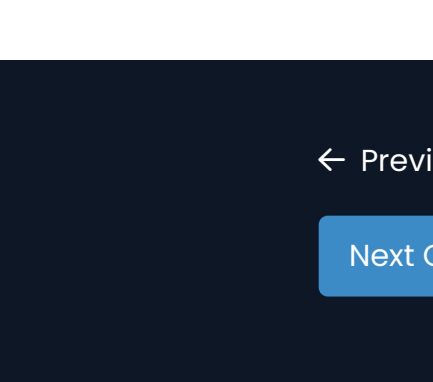
Chapter 99: Offense and Defense

SHE'S FORCING ME TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE GOLDEN LAND.
I'VE BEEN SEPARATED FROM DENKEN.
VOLLZANBEL! HELLFIRE SUMMONING!
I HAVE MY HANDS FULL JUST FENDING OFF HER ATTACKS AND TRYING TO HIT BACK...
...BUT SHE'S HAD NO PROBLEM MOVING ME AROUND AS SHE DESIRES.
SHE REALLY IS STRONG.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO SEPARATE US, YOU KNOW.
I WASN'T GOING TO HELP DENKEN ANYWAY.
I'M A WORRIER, YOU SEE.
I JUST DID WHAT I THOUGHT BEST TO INCREASE MY CHANCES.
YOU HUMANS TEND TO BE MUCH BETTER AT COORDINATING WITH EACH OTHER.
BUT YOU'RE PRETTY COLD-HEARTED...
... FRIEREN.
AT THIS RATE, MACHT WILL KILL HIM.
I DON'T THINK SO.
THIS IS WHY DEMONS ARE SO USELESS.
I HAVE FAITH IN HIM.
I COULD SEE IN HIS EYES THAT HE'S DETERMINED TO WIN.
JUDRADJIRUM! DESTRUCTIVE LIGHTNING!
NOW MY TASK IS TO SLAY THE GREATER DEMON SOLITÄR. I'LL REDUCE YOU TO ASHES.
YOU MUST BE JOKING.
DENKEN IS FACING MACHT OF THE GOLDEN LAND, ONE OF THE SEVEN SAGES OF DESTRUCTION.
BECAUSE DIAGOLDZE DOESN'T WORK ON HIM...
...THERE IS NO WAY MACHT CAN BE DEFEATED BY A HUMAN MAGE–
AH, NO...
MY BAD HABIT.
CARELESSNESS AND ARROGANCE ARE FATAL FLAWS AMONG PREDATORS.
THEY'VE COST MANY DEMONS THEIR LIVES.
AFTER BEING HUNTERS FOR SO LONG...
...WE NEVER LEARNED WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE HUNTED.
I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO SPEAK WITH YOU MORE, BUT YOU GIVE ME NO CHOICE.
THE SMARTEST OPTION FOR ME HERE...
...IS TO USE EVERYTHING I'VE GOT TO KILL YOU...
...AND THEN GO ASSIST MACHT.
THE FLOW OF HER MANA HAS CHAN-
KR ASH
DOOOOM
THIS IS THE MOST POWERFUL SPELL I CAN CAST.
ISN'T IT IRONIC?
I'VE STUDIED ALL KINDS OF SPELLS, BUT IN THE END...
...THIS SIMPLE SPELL THAT DISCHARGES MANA...
...IS THE EASIEST WAY TO KILL A PERSON.
ENEMIES WITH A LARGE AMOUNT OF MANA REALLY DO TEND TO BE BUILT STRONGER.
SO I JUST NEED TO BLAST YOU UNTIL YOU STOP MOVING.
THERE ISN'T MUCH DIFFERENCE IN OUR MANA.
KABOOM
VOO
BUT HER MANA CONTROL IS ON ANOTHER LEVEL.
HER ATTACKS ARE THE SAME, BUT THEY'RE UNBELIEVABLY DENSE. SHE'S BREAKING THROUGH MY DEFENSIVE SPELLS AS IF THEY'RE SCRAPS OF PAPER.
I CAN'T TAKE TOO MANY HITS.
A WELL-PLACED STRIKE COULD KILL ME INSTANTLY.
AND WORST OF ALL...
...THE MANA IN HER IMPREGNABLE DEFENSE IS JUST AS DENSE.
I WAS ALREADY STRUGGLING TO HIT HER WITH OFFENSIVE SPELLS...
...BUT NOW ALMOST EVERYTHING GETS NEGATED.
HAVING MANA CONTROL THIS SOLID AND ACCURATE...
...WITHOUT THE NEED FOR AN INCANTATION IS CRAZY.
BOOM
THIS IS WHY I HATE DEMONS I'VE NEVER HEARD OF...
AT THIS RATE, SHE'S GOING TO OVERWHELM ME.
FRIEREN.
YOU'D BETTER GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
I LOOKED INTO THE AFTERMATH OF YOUR BATTLE WITH AURA THE GUILLOTINE.
I KNOW YOU'RE LIMITING YOUR MANA.
BUT AFTER ACTUALLY SEEING IT IN PERSON, I'M TRULY SURPRISED.
YOU CAN LIMIT YOUR MANA WITHOUT INSTABILITY.
HAD I NOT INVESTIGATED BEFOREHAND...
...I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE THROUGH IT EITHER.
IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN MASTER IN ONLY A FEW CENTURIES OF TRAINING.
YOU MUST HAVE PUT A LOT OF BLOOD AND TEARS INTO IT.
YOU REALLY ARE WONDERFUL.
AND YOU BLABBER A LOT.
YOU SEEM LIKE SOMEONE WHO CAN'T KEEP A SECRET.
I HAVEN'T TOLD ANYONE ABOUT IT YET.
I DOUBT ANYONE WOULD BELIEVE ME ANYWAY.
YOUR MANA CONTROL IS TOO PERFECT.
IS THAT SO?
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
ALL THE MORE REASON TO KILL HER HERE AND NOW.
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
...YOUR APPRENTICE WAS ALSO GOOD AT LIMITING HER MANA.
BUT SHE'S NOT YET GOOD ENOUGH TO FOOL A GREATER DEMON.
SHE STILL HAS A LOT MORE TO REFINE.
YOU FOUGHT FERN AND STARK TOO, HUH?
I DID.
THIS WOUND ON MY SHOULDER IS HER DOING.
YOUR FRIENDS WERE ANNOYINGLY GOOD AT WORKING TOGETHER.
YOU TAUGHT THEM WELL.
HEH.
FERN'S BECOME QUITE CAPABLE.
SHE'S PROBABLY BEEN TURNED INTO A GOLDEN STATUE SOMEWHERE...
...JUST LIKE DENKEN.
NO.
I KILLED HER.
I KILLED BOTH OF THEM.
RIGHT.
I WAS HOPING THEY REMEMBERED WHAT I SAID ABOUT RUNNING AWAY FROM GREATER DEMONS.
BOOOOOM
I SEE. IT REALLY IS A SIMPLE SPELL.
LOOKS LIKE I CAN PLAY THE COPYCAT GAME TOO.


We talked a lot!
I had a good time!

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